

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
INR-10 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05
SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-11 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-05
/132 W

-----110282 150756Z /17

R 150008Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8940
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 04339

PASS DOE AND NRC; TOKYO FOR DOE SCIREP

USIAEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH, OTRA, PARM, ENRG, US, MX
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR ENERGY - VISIT TO LAGUNA VERDE SITE

REF: STATE 59629 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATES PROMPT AND USEFUL GUIDANCE
FURNISHED REFTEL. AS IT TURNED OUT, AMBASSADOR WAS UNABLE
TO MAKE TRIP BECAUSE OF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ
PORTILLO. IN HIS PLACE, S&T COUNSELOR/DOE SCIREP AND
E/C OFFICER MADE SITE VISIT. AMBASSADOR HAS OPEN INVITA-
TION AND MAY MAKE VISIT AT LATER DATE.

2. VISIT ON MARCH 9 WAS ORGANIZED BY CFE AS PART OF ITS
BIMONTHLY STATUS REVIEW OF LAGUNA VERDE PROJECT WITH
EBASCO, WHICH IS ARCHITECT-ENGINEER AND OVERALL PROJECT
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MGR FOR CFE. ON THIS OCCASION, EBASCO PRESIDENT WAS HERE
FOR THE REVIEW. THERE WAS NO INEN REP INVOLVED IN THE
VISIT.

3. DURING VISIT, THERE WAS NO DIRECT DISCUSSION OF NUCLEAR
FUEL SUPPLY OR RELATED MATTERS BETWEEN EMBASSY REPS AND
CFE. ONE EBASCO REP RAISED IDEA OF MEXICAN PHYSICAL

SECURITY VISIT TO U.S. WITH US, AND WE NOTED TO HIM IMPORTANCE OF U.S. TEAM VISIT HERE. EBASCO REP INDICATED THAT CFE WAS RELUCTANT TO DEAL WITH USG DIRECTLY ON THIS SUBJECT, ALWAYS DEFERRING TO INEN. WE NOTED THAT INEN ALWAYS DEFERRED, IN TURN, TO FONSEC.

4. AFTER LONG HISTORY OF PROBLEMS, CONSTRUCTION AT SITE NOW SEEMS TO BE MOVING AHEAD AT A NORMAL PACE. THE ORIGINAL U.S. AND MEXICAN CONTRACTORS, BURNS AND ROE AND BUFETE, WERE COMPLETELY DISMISSED AND REPLACED BY EBASCO AND ICA. AN EBASCO MAN IS THE SITE SUPERVISOR. SOME 3400 PEOPLE ARE NOW EMPLOYED IN THE CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES ON THE SITE, AND THIS INCLUDES 52 EBASCO PERSONNEL. CONSTRUCTION OF THE TWO 675 MWE GENERAL ELECTRIC BWR UNITS IS ESTIMATED TO BE 14-15 PERCENT COMPLETE; UNIT 1 IS 17.5 PERCENT COMPLETE. THUS, REACTOR AND TURBINE-GENERATOR PEDESTALS FOR UNIT 1 ARE FINISHED, AND CONTAINMENT LINER INSTALLATION IS IN PROGRESS. ALL MAJOR COMPONENTS HAVE BEEN ON SITE FOR SOME TIME, AND STORAGE IS NOW IN QUONSET HUTS UNDER GOOD SYSTEM OF CONTROLS, INCLUDING SOME NITROGEN PRESSURIZATION OF REACTOR VESSELS AND OTHER COMPONENTS, AND EXTERIOR HUMIDITY CONTROL WHERE APPROPRIATE.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MANY CHANGES ARE BEING MADE TO KEEP UP WITH NEW GUIDELINES ISSUED BY NRC. INEN'S
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SAFETY REVIEW OF THIS PROJECT IS BEING ASSISTED BY AN IAEA EXPERT (FROM NRC) AND A U.S. CONSULTING FIRM (NUCLEAR SERVICES CORP.)

6. PLANS ARE TO TRAIN THE PLANT OPERATORS USING GE'S SIMULATORS AND TO PROVIDE FURTHER TRAINING IN TAIWAN AND PERHAPS ALSO IN SPAIN.

7. IN GENERAL STATEMENT TO LARGE GROUP AT PLANT SITE (LARGELY FOR OUR BENEFIT, WE EXPECT) CFE DEPUTY DIRECTOR MORENO TORRES INDICATED THAT CFE'S OPERATIONS DEPT WAS MANAGING THE NUCLEAR FUEL AND THAT CFE WANTED TO "FULFILL ALL INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN SECURITY, REGULATIONS OF IAEA, AND US-IAEA COMMITMENTS." HE NOTED THAT SOON THE MEXICAN ARMY AND NAVY WOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO PROVISION OF SECURITY IN THE LAGUNA VERDE ZONE. THESE WERE, HE SAID, THE MOST RESPECTED ORGANIZATIONS IN MEXICO TO ESTABLISH DISCIPLINE AND ORGANIZATION. CFE WAS AWARE, MORENO TORRES SAID, THAT NUCLEAR STATIONS MUST MEET STRICT SECURITY REGULATIONS, NOT JUST FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, BUT FROM THE SABOTAGE ANGLE AS WELL. CFE INTENDED, HE SAID, TO BUILD THE PLANT IN THE

BEST POSSIBLE MANNER.

8. WE GATHER THAT, ALTHOUGH FIGURES ARE UNOFFICIAL AT THIS POINT, TOTAL COST OF THIS PROJECT IS CLIMBING TO NEIGHBORHOOD OF US\$ 1 BILLION. LUCEY

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